1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálèmi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe. They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the powerful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accordance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpā*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'corporate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. But of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esoži*, where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esoži* is placed under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esoži* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esoži* has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch with his *esoži*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esoži*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esoži* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil.

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included